

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly

VOLUME XVIII No. 3

1988

“RUTPEX”

Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

Rutland County Stamp Club

1934-1959



GREEN MOUNTAIN BOY

in conjunction with
350th Champlain Anniversary Festival

CHRIST THE KING SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

July 9, 10, 11, 12, 1959

RUTLAND - - - VERMONT

RUTLAND COUNTY STAMP CLUB, Inc.

The acronym RUTPEX may puzzle the uninitiated, but spells excitement among the RUTland Philatelists at EXhibition time. The members of the Rutland County Stamp Club have reason to be proud of the exhibits the club has sponsored in the 54 years since it was founded.

The club was organized on 7 December 1934, by Cassie Belle Mason. Her husband, A. C. Mason, was elected as the first president. Other officers were: G. Burr White, first vice president; Mrs. Percy F. Hall, second vice president; Mrs. A. C. Mason, secretary. At a subsequent meeting Edmund P. Shaw became the treasurer. Mrs. Mason served as secretary and member of the program committee for many years. She remained active until her death in 1966.

Almost half of the nine charter members were from the distaff side. Besides Mrs. Mason and Mrs. Hall, there were Miss Ida E. Durivage and Miss Helen Smith. Among the men, in addition to Alexander Mason and G. Burr White, were names familiar to the Rutland community: Thomas B. McDevitt, E. J. Briggs, Andrew Ferguson and Fred Stafford. Very quickly, eight other names were added. These new members always liked to consider themselves as charter members:

Valerie Steward
Burr Waite
Frederick Baldwin
V. Clyde Fuller

Guy Whitcomb
Edmund P. Shaw
J. Marsh Spafford
Elizabeth Carrigan

Of these 17 people only two are living today: Fred Baldwin and Tom McDevitt. Fred Baldwin was age 12 when he started to collect stamps.

The first meeting of the Rutland County Stamp Club was held on 14 December, a week after the organizational meeting. It met in the Chamber of Commerce rooms. After some necessary club business, the meeting got down to its real purpose. Papers were read and the Columbian issue of 1893 commemorative stamps discussed by Miss Durivage, Mrs. Hall, Fred Stafford, Andrew Ferguson and Mr. and Mrs. Mason. Several members brought their stamp collections to exhibit, while others found an opportunity to do some trading.

From this auspicious beginning, the RCSC has become the longest existing stamp club in Vermont. Membership has grown to around one hundred men and women of various ages. The current by-laws state that membership is open to any person of good character 12 years of age or older. Dues are three dollars annually, payable by October first. Originally, membership was restricted to Rutland County, but the appeal of the club began to extend to neighboring states. Presently, there are approximately 20 members from out-of-state who attend meetings, weather permitting. The meetings are held every other Thursday from September through May. As the membership expanded over the years, it became necessary to find larger accommodations to hold the meetings. These included the Neighborhood Room at the Marble Bank, the Central Vermont Public Service Corporation facilities, the Aldermanic Chambers at City Hall, the Community House, private homes and, finally, the Lawrence Recreation Center, which the club now considers its permanent home.

The first exhibition for the public was held in October 1937, in the auditorium of the library, now known as the Nella Grimm Fox Room. Twenty frames of exhibit material were displayed. Annual exhibits continued but became a springtime event, usually in April. Because of the increased exposure to be gained, the exhibit was moved to the Rutland Fair in 1953. The exhibits were phased out at the library by 1955. From a small beginning at the Rutland Fair with only 20 frames of material displayed, the show now exhibits 55 frames of outstanding collections, viewed by thousands

of Fairgoers. A feature of that first annual philatelic exhibition at the Fair was a commemorative cover (envelope) available at the specially arranged postal station where the covers were postmarked: VT STATE FAIR STA, RUTLAND, VT 05701. On the cover was a picture of the Green Mountain Boy, adopted by the stamp club as its official symbol. The statue itself stands in the Main Street park. In 1953, it can be noted, parenthetically, a letter could be mailed for 3¢!

The annual exhibit at the Fair includes displays of antique postcards, collecting technically referred to as deltiology. Many collectible postcards depict romantic themes; others recall historic events or famous places. This logically related interest in postcards is welcomed by the club. A number of members devote their time to this facet of philately. Postcards are important for a special cancellation or a first issue of a stamp. They can be equally valuable for the illustration on the face of a card . . . a picture, for instance, of an exposition, a World's Fair or a scene that enhances the issue of a postal stamp.

The only lapse in the annual show at the Rutland Fair occurred in 1970 when several exhibition buildings burned, leaving the RCSC without a site for the show. The fire occurred within a few days of the Fair opening. Not only was the exhibit area itself destroyed, but all the philatelic equipment, flags, frames and lighting. The souvenir covers planned for that year were ready, so they, at least, could be mailed. The stamp club replaced the equipment and re-opened its exhibit the following year in the Presidents Building. Assured now of a prime location for the annual week-long display, it has become one of the most popular exhibits at the Fair.

PROGRAM — 1988-1989

1988

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Sept. 3
thru Sept. 11 | 35th Philatelic and Deltiology Exhibition at Vermont State Fair, Rutland |
| Sept. 22 | Slide Program: Mail by the Seat of Their Pants — Kenneth Yates |
| Oct. 6 | Slide Program: Historical Events and First Day Covers —
Linda Gagner |
| Oct. 20 | Fall Auction |
| Nov. 3 | Young Members Night — Peter Nikolaidis, Chairman |
| Nov. 17 | Early American Newspapers, 1690-1840 (overhead projector) —
William F. Alsop, Jr. |
| Dec. 1 | Christmas Party — Michael McMorro, Chairman |
| Dec. 15 | Christmas Exhibits — Full Member Participation |

1989

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Jan. 5 | Alternate Hobby Night — Kenneth O. Proctor, Chairman |
| Jan. 19 | Winter Auction |
| Feb. 2 | Presidents Night — Nick Nakolaidis |
| Feb. 16 | Washline Exhibit — James P. Mongeon, Chairman |
| March 2 | Slide Program: Our Canadian Neighbors —
William B. Mullan, Chairman |
| March 30 | New Members Night — James M. Franklin, Chairman |
| April 13 | Spring Auction |
| April 27 | Railway Mail Service — Lyle K. Rice |
| May 11 | Rutland Railway Association Program — Tom Tomlinson |
| May 25 | Policy Meeting — 7 p.m. |
| June 8 | A Social Evening at the Roger Harris Residence |



The tenth and last stamp exhibit in 1955, held at the Rutland Free Library.



*Postmark: Rutland, Vt.
Sep 7 8AM 1953*

Cancelled cover from the first philatelic exhibition at the Rutland Fair, 1953.

The silver anniversary in 1959 of RCSC coincided with the Champlain 350th Anniversary Festival. The Rutland club was the only stamp club in the state, and the only organization in Rutland to participate in the joint effort by New York State and Vermont, which celebrated the 350th Anniversary of the discovery of Lake Champlain by Samuel de Champlain in 1609. Behind the scenes, John Pell from Fort Ticonderoga and Perry Merrill, Vermont state forester and general chairman of the festival, were very supportive in an advisory capacity during the preparatory stages in setting up an exhibition. Then with Fred Baldwin as general chairman and treasurer, RUTPEX was mounted in the auditorium of Christ the King School on South Main Street. The space was donated by the church. Ainslee Hassam was in charge of exhibits. Other members on the preparations committee included Tom McDevitt, arrangements; Edmund Davenport, setup and decorations; Webster D. Barter, public relations; Sidney D. Harris, publicity; Rowland P. Pollard, dealer board; Charles Pentek, tickets; Leon E. Shoro, souvenir covers; Charles A. Bullock, raffle, and Elroy M. Chase, banquet. The show opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. There was a speech by Mayor Dan Healy and the crowning of Miss Carlene Carlson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Carlson, as RUTPEX queen. Over 1,600 people came to view the 235 stamp frames during the four-day exhibit from 9 July through the 12th.

Also participating in the opening ceremony was Sister Mary Fidelma, curator of the Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum at Regis College in Weston, Massachusetts. Cardinal Francis Spellman, archbishop of New York at that time, was among the best-known stamp collectors in this country. His collection of 54 plates of Vatican City stamps was featured in the Court of Honor at RUTPEX. The Spellman exhibit marked the 30th anniversary of the Lateran Pacts of 1929, through which the Italian Government restored to the Vatican a portion of the territories confiscated in 1879, and through which the Vatican City was authorized to establish its independent postal service and issue postage stamps. The collection at RUTPEX contained examples of every Vatican stamp since 1929. Each album was mounted on parchment and colorfully illuminated to resemble ancient monastic manuscripts. In many cases genuine gold leaf and silver were used for initial letters and fancy floral patterns.

Many frames in the general exhibit contained stamps on postal history and on Boy Scouting, starting from 1900, when Boy Scouts were used as messengers in the Boer War. There were stamps depicting horses, hobby horses, royalty on horses, Queen Elizabeth and North Pole flights. Among the out-of-state collectors was Edwin Mayer of New York City, a winner of the Grand Award at the "Interpostal" show in Hamburg, Germany. Collections were displayed from as far away as Albuquerque, New Mexico. There were also two of the great rarities of the stamp world, the inverted 24-cent airmail stamp, owned by Fred Chaffee of Rutland, and the Brattleboro Postmaster's Provisional. This provisional stamp, distributed a full year before the government issued its first postage stamps, was one of the first postmaster provisionals to be brought out in the country. Only 500 were ever made. From Europe a collection of 41 album pages prepared by the Swiss Postal Administration and Courvisier Helio were on display. It traced the story of various Swiss postage stamps. From the Near East came a postal exhibit prepared by the Egyptian Government containing examples of stamps issued since the revolution.

People who came to the exhibit were particularly interested in another Court of Honor display . . . a first-day cover mailed to Colonel Charles Lindburgh's mother in Detroit. Along with it was a 10¢ stamp depicting Lindburgh's plane "The Spirit of St. Louis." There were many covers from the Civil War period, including a print showing the flag with 34 stars and a field piece beneath it. One could even find an exhibit of cancellations from dead post offices (DPOs), such as North Tunbridge, established in 1875 and discontinued in 1908; West Randolph, established in 1831, discontinued in 1923, and Weybridge Lower Falls, established in 1833 and discontinued in 1886.*

A special feature of the exhibit was the RUTPEX Post Office, run by Tony Cantone, a local postal employee. The United States Post Office Department authorized a special postmarking hand stamp which read RUTPEX STATION, RUTLAND, VT. The temporary post office had an old country store setup. A supply of all the latest U.S. stamps went on sale, as well as Silver Anniversary cacheted covers. Some 1000 covers bearing a RUTPEX station cancellation were sent to all the 50 states. According to Leon Shoro, chairman of souvenir covers, "From now on they're a collector's item."

The judges at the 25th anniversary celebration of RCSC were Doctor E. J. Moore of Glens Falls, New York, chairman; Sidney D. Harris of Rutland and William G. Briggs, Jr. of Boston, Massachusetts. The judges on the second day of the show made two Grand Awards: one to John L. Briggs, Jr. of New York City for his 19th cen-

* Another DPO was announced on 7 June 1988. The Chester Depot Post Office closed the end of June. For about 100 years the post office was housed in the Town Hall and for the past two and a half years was in a business block, sharing space with a real estate firm. The post office served 125 families. First and last cancellations from the Chester Depot Post Office will now become a collector's item.



Cutting the ribbon at the opening of RUTPEX, July 1959. From left to right: Carlene Carlson, RUTPEX queen; Sister M. Fidelma, Regis College, Weston, Massachusetts; Dan J. Healy, Mayor of Rutland; Fred L. Baldwin, general chairman. Unidentified is the bobby-soxer partially hidden by the sign.



Fred L. Baldwin



Autographed cover, cancelled at RUTPEX in 1959, the year of the Silver Anniversary of the Rutland County Stamp Club.

RUTLAND COUNTY STAMP CLUB
Golden Anniversary Year
 1934 - 1984



Fifty Years of Organized Collecting
 Rutland, Vermont 05701



Cancelled cover in 1984, the year of the Golden Anniversary of Rutland County Stamp Club.

tury Hungary on cover. The second Grand Award went to Thomas McDevitt for the best topical exhibit on horses. Two additional top awards were presented. One made by the Rutland County Stamp Club went to Ainslee Hassam, Rutland, for a display of U.S. postal history. The second top award for the best U.S. exhibit went to Barbara R. Mueller of Jefferson, Wisconsin, for a study of the 3¢ and 4¢ issues of 1887-88, called the "Orphan Bank Notes."

A new award appeared on Friday of the show. It was the 350th Champlain Festival Gold Medal Award. The gold award had an engraving of Samuel de Champlain crossing the lake with a group of Indians. This coveted, special award was made to five recipients who best presented the postal history of the Lake Champlain Basin. Trophies went to Edwin Mayer of New York City and Ainslee Hassam of Rutland. Also receiving the gold medals were Mark E. Smith of New York City for a presentation of Antarctic postal history and Robert Hale, Malone, New York, for frames exhibiting covers of northern New York. The fifth Champlain medal went to Lloyd Hayward, Montpelier, Vermont, for a showing of Vermont covers of the Champlain area.

With 235 stamp frames on exhibit, awards came from many directions, with a number of exhibitors garnering more than one trophy. The Vermont Philatelic Society made an award to Arthur B. Barker of Waterbury, Connecticut, for his exhibit dealing with Vermont philately. The Festival Award went to Edwin Mayer of New York. The American Airmail Society made an award to Mark E. Smith, Jr. of Miami, Florida. The U.S. Cancellation Club Award went to Frederick S. Chaffee of Rutland. Two other exhibitors won additional awards: Thomas McDevitt, Rutland, from the American topical Association; John L. Briggs, New York, from the Society of Philatelic American. In addition to the many citations recounted above, there were three silver award winners, five bronze awards and four ribbons given out.

The chairman of the judges, Dr. E. M. Moore, had high praise for RUTPEX '59. According to Dr. Moore, the exhibition was the best ever held in Vermont and, in fact, one of the best he had seen in the northern New England area. He said it was comparable to exhibits found in Atlantic City, Philadelphia, New York and Boston.

The exhibit was climaxed by a well-attended banquet on Saturday, 11 July at the Hotel Bardwell. William Johnston, Jr., an active member, was the master of ceremonies. The Vermont Philatelic Society chose this particular weekend to hold its biennial meeting. Among the newly-elected officers of the state society was Fred Baldwin of Rutland as vice president.

When the time came to celebrate the Golden Anniversary of the Rutland County Stamp Club in 1984, it was appropriate that the two members who were part of the 1934 beginnings should be honored. The banquet was held on 20 December at The Palms in Rutland. Fred Baldwin as a pre-teen had started to collect stamps from boxes discarded in alleys. As an adult in later years, Mr. Baldwin could display an impressive collection of stamps from five continents and had won many awards. On this occasion he was one of three to receive an award from the American Philatelic Society. A similar award was made to Thomas McDevitt, the lone remaining charter member of the original nine and an active collector. He still organizes the club's display at the Rutland Fair each year and does a considerable amount of promotional work for the organization. Fred Baldwin says he is "the sparkplug" of the club. The third recipient from the American Philatelic Society was an elderly gentleman from Springfield, Vermont, Lester LeDrew. Mr. LeDrew, an avid collector also shares with Tom McDevitt the setting-up and hosting of the annual exhibit at the Fair. At the banquet he epitomized the fun that stamp collectors enjoy as he urged the well-attended festivities' crowd to come to the Thursday evening meetings of the local society.

James Mongeon, president of the RCSC in 1984, gave the welcoming speech at the banquet and recalled how Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Mason gathered a few friends together 50 years ago and the organization was created. Secretary Charles LaChance

gave a presentation of the club's history, including its 25th anniversary which had been celebrated with great fanfare. The occasion of the 50th was marked by a slide program on collecting stamps and historical postcards. The slide show was presented by Michael McMorrow. Everyone at the celebration took home a collectible cover, commemorating the group's Golden Anniversary. It was designed by Tom McDevitt and hand posted by Rutland Postmaster George Bond.

Stamp collecting may become a business for some but for the majority it is a universally popular hobby that has many ramifications in history, ecology and the arts, as well as creating a host of friends with a common interest. No one has summarized the scope of philatelics more ably than Cardinal Spellman did for the 25th RUTPEX. He said:

Stamps are miniature documents of human history. They are a means by which a country gives sensible expression to its hopes and its needs, its beliefs and its ideals. They mirror the past and presage the future. They delineate cultural attainments, industrial works, domestic, civil and social life. In a word, these vignettes give a vivid picture of the world, its occupants and their multifarious endeavors.

RUTLAND COUNTY STAMP CLUB PRESIDENTS

Alexander C. Mason*	Charles Pentek
Robert J. Alpert	Roger Harris
Franklin J. Wells	Kenneth LaPlante
Mrs. A. C. Mason*	Elroy M. Chase*
V. Clyde Fuller*	Lester LeDrew
Arthur P. Sylvester	Phillip Faden*
Ainslee O. Hassam	Archibald J. Todd
Thomas B. McDevitt	Michael McMorrow**
Robert V. N. Davis*	Stephen Maddaloni**
Norman E. Favor*	Gloria Quaw**
Charles W. Prentiss	Homer Smith*
Webster D. Barter*	Ernest LaRose
Edmund H. Davenport	Michael Blaisdell**
Leonard McCabe	James P. Mongeon**
Charles Bullock	Nick Nikolaidis (Bethel, Vt.)

* Deceased

** Served more than one term

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Fred L. Baldwin	Kenneth A. Yates
Thomas B. McDevitt	Louise Newton Adams

Acknowledgments

This history was gleaned from news articles published in *The Rutland Herald* for 1934, 1959 and 1984. Additional information and illustrative material provided by long-time members of the stamp club. The manuscript was prepared by Jean Ross, managing editor of the RHS *Quarterly*. Mrs. Ross is a member of the board of directors of the Preservation Trust of Vermont.



Tom McDevitt and Les LeDrew in charge of the stamp exhibit at the Rutland Fair in September, 1984. (Picture by Diane Wyman)

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
101 CENTER STREET, RUTLAND, VERMONT 05701
(802) 775-2006; 773-3417

Membership in the Society is open to all upon payment of appropriate dues. (See the dues schedule below.) With membership, for its period, go a subscription to the Quarterly, any newsletters, a copy of the Annual Report, entitlement to vote at business meetings, and benefits accruing from support of the Society's Museums, exhibits, programs, collections and library. The year through which membership is paid and the category are noted on all address labels.

Please send any address change on Postal Service Form 3576 (a postcard freely available at your local post office).

Annual dues categories are: Sustaining \$100 or more	Contributing	\$15
Sponsor \$ 25	Regular	\$ 5
Special one-payment categories are: Life \$125	Memorial	\$150

Advance payment for 2 or 3 years is welcome, helping to reduce costs.

Please make checks payable to: Rutland Historical Society
and send to: Mrs. Frank O'Brien
145 Ash Street
Rutland, VT 05701

Manuscripts are invited: address correspondence to the Managing Editor.

Editor: Michael L. Austin

Managing Editor: Jean C. Ross

Copyright © 1988 The Rutland Historical Society, Inc.
ISSN 0748-2493

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
101 Center Street
Rutland, Vermont 05701

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
FORWARDING AND
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Rutland, Vermont
Permit No. 12



The number or letter on the address label indicates your dues status:
87 one year in arrears 88 current Life membership